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THE PAPER

Called the

AGREEMENT of the PEOPLE

taken into

CONSIDERATION,

AND

The Lawfulneſs of Subſcription to it Examined, and Reſolved in the Negative, by the

Miniſters of Chriſt

in the PROVINCE of

LANCASTER.

Publiſhed by them eſpecially for the ſatisfaction of the Conſcience, and guiding of the practiſe of our entirely honored and beloved, the People of our ſeveral Churches, committed to our Charge; and for the general good of this Church & Nation.

LONDON,
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The paper called the Agreement of the People taken into Consideration, and the lawfulness of Subscription to it examined, and resolved in the negative, by the Ministers of Christ in the Province of LANCASTER.

THis Agreement being drawn up in the name *of the People of England*, and by the Title of the Book being *tendered to the Consideration of the People*, as also by a *Declaration*, bearing the name of *his Excellency* THOMAS *Lord* FAIRFAX, *and his general Councel of Officers*, annexed to it, it is said to be *tendered to the People of England*; and the said *Declaration desiring that all good people of England will cordially embrace it, and by Subscription declare their Concurrence, and accord thereto, when it shall be tendered to them, as is directed therein:* And it being of universal Concernment, taking in, and desposing of all publique Affairs, not onely of the *Civil State*, but of *Religion*: We the *Ministers of Christ* in the *Province of Lancaster*, who have constantly and cordially adhered to the Cause of *King and Parliament*, both in the first and second War, and have opposed, according to our places and Callings, the late Scottish Engagement, (by which many of us have been Sufferers,) and (having

been called thereunto by the Authority of Parliament) have not only taken, but presst upon our People both *the Vow and Protestation* of 5 May, 1641. and the *Solemn League & Covenant*, in the latter of which we have bound ourselves, Art. 6. in the cause therein Covenanted, *all the days of our lives zealously and constantly to continue against all opposition, and to promote the same, according to our power, against all lets and impediments whatsoever; and what we are not able ourselves to suppress or overcome, to reveal, and make known that it may be timely prevented or removed. And Art. 4. That we shall also, with all faithfulness, endeavour the discovery of all such as have been or shall be Incendiaries, Malignants, or evil Instruments, by hindering of* [illegible] *shall be Incendiaries, Malignants, or evil Instruments, by hindering the Reformation of Religion, dividing the King from his People, or one of the Kingdoms from another, or making any faction or parties amongst the People, contrary to this League and Covenant*; do hold our selves bound (our common interest, and relations, our special vocations, and our aforesaid Engagements being considered) not only deliberately to weigh, and resolve, with our selves and one another, what to do in reference to this Agreement, but publiquely to make known our apprehensions concerning it, for the resolution of those that may be in doubt about it, and that those that are for it may have our Reasons why we dissent from it; and we humbly and dearly entreat our highly honored and beloved Country-men and Brethren of this Kingdom, into whose hand this our paper may come, as well the Composers and Publishers of the Agreement, as those to whom it is directed and intended, to be offered for their Subscription, more especially the Inhabitants of this County, unto whom we stand in a more intimate relation, both as living among, and having the spiritual Charge respectively of them, candidly to take and interpret, and conscientiously to perpend this our maturely conceived, and setled Judgment.

This Draught, called the Agreement of the People, being a Platform of State-Government, calculated for this Nation, and so, more immediately of a Political or Civil Consideration; Our undertaking is not to survey, or give our Verdict on every thing it holds forth divisively, or by distinct Sections, nor yet shall we examine any thing in it Politically, or by the rule of State-Maxims, or the Laws of the Realm, we remit that work to the learned

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States-men and Lawyers of the Land *: But we shall deal with it as Christians and Ministers, enquiring and determining according to our Talent how it may stand or disagree with the dictates of Conscience regulated by the Word of God: And in doing this, our method will be, 1. To give an account of our Conceptions upon the whole plot or frame taken together. 2. To speak distinctly and particularly to the Ninth Section, which concerneth Religion; whereupon we shall be the rather particular, because it is both more proper to our profession, and more pressing to our souls.

* See Mr *Ashurst's* Reasons, &c. and Mr *Prynnes* Speech.

For the first; The project of this Agreement is to place a power in the People, to alter when they will the Government of the Kingdom, to abrogate the present, and to erect a new form of Policy, and to be Lords paramount, or transcendental Moderators over those to whom the Government is committed, assuming to deliver them their Authority, to give them Laws, to disanul the Laws they make, to confine their Legislative power, and to oppose them by force of Arms when they see good; and to move them now to exert the said power. This may appear by the whole tenor of the Agreement, and namely in that it represents the People *ordering the present Parliament to dissolve* (*a*), appointing *new Representatives of a new* proportion and Constitution, (both in regard of places and persons electing,) and of the manner, times, and other circumstances of Election (*b*), *which are to have the supream trust in order to the preservation and government of the Whole, and their power is to extend without the consent or concurrence of any other person or persons, to the erecting and abolishing of Courts of Justice, and publique Offices, and to the enacting, altering, repealing, and declaring of Laws, and the highest and final Judgment, concerning all natural or civil things* (*c*), limiting the said Representatives from having power in many things (*d*), directing and restraining them in matter of Religion (*e*), and repealing all Laws, Ordinances, and Statutes, contrary to the Liberty in Religion which they provide (*f*), reserving in themselves, or any of them, power to resist them by force of Arms in some cases (*g*); And that such a fundamental change was in the Intentions of the Compilers, is evident by the Declaration following it, which saith, *it contains the best and most hopeful Foundations for the Peace and future well-*

a Pag. 8 partic. 1.

b Pag 8. partic. 2. &c.

c Pa. 24. part. 8

d Pa. 24. partic. 8. &c.

e Pa. 26. par. 9

f Pa. 27 part 4

g P. 27. part. 10

Government of this Nation (h), and in it they disclaim to *meddle in any thing, save the Fundamental setling of that power* (*to wit, the Law-giving, or Judicial power over the Kingdom*) *in the most equal and hopeful way for common Right, Freedom, and Safety, as in this Agreement* (i).

h Page 30.

i Page 32.

This Agreement then perswades the people to cast off, or depose the present Government, to turn themselves into an Anarchy, or jumbled multitude, to become a people without distinction or order, to run themselves into that confusion which the Jews were brought unto by the *Babylonian Captivity*, to be *as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no ruler over them* (k), and so fit for nothing but to be angled by them that desire to fish in troubled waters, for so it follows in the Text, *they take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drags,* (l) as though we were a colony, or company of men, swarmed or broken out from some other Nation, and newly landed in this Island, free and ready to elect and set up a frame of a Common-wealth, such as we should like best. Unto all this we say;

k Habak. 1. 14.

l Verse 15.

1. We are a constituted Kingdom, a setled State, and under a lawful Government, which is very ancient, fully understood both by Magistrates and People, and deeply rooted in mens affections, both by long habituated exercise, and the well-approved benefices of it.

2. The Government we are under is good, wholesom, equitable for the Constitution of it, fitly ballanced and proportioned, being reduced to the golden-mean, lying between Monarchical Tyranny, and Popular Anarchy, it hath had the general sufferage to be one of the moderatest and best tempered Governments in *Europe*.

3. The form of Government which we have we are bound to own and continue under, not only by the single tye of the duty of Subjects, but by the sacred obligation *of Oaths, Vows and Covenants*, into which we have been called by lawful authority, prescribing or propounding them to us; as namely, 1. The Oath of Allegiance, in which the Subject solemnly sweareth in these words, *I shall bear faith and true allegiance to his Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, and him, and them, will defend to the uttermost of my power, against all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever*

ſoever which ſhall be made againſt his or their perſons, their Crown or Dignity. 2. The Oath of the Kings Supremacy, wherein are theſe words, *I do promiſe, that from henceforth I ſhall bear faith and true allegiance to the Kings Highneſs, his Heirs, and lawful Succeſſors, and to my power ſhall aſſiſt and defend all juriſdictions, Priviledges, Preeminencies and Authorities granted or belonging to the Kings Highneſs, his Heirs and Succeſſors, or united to the imperial Crown of this Realm.* 3. The Vow and and Proteſtation of 5 *May*, 1641. in which who ſo entreth into it, bindeth himſelf thus, *I do in the preſence of Almighty God, promiſe, vow and proteſt to maintain and defend, as far as lawfully I may, with my life, power and eſtate, according to the duty of my Allegiance, his Majeſties Royal Perſon, Honor and Eſtate, as alſo the Power and Priviledges of Parliament, the lawful Rights and Liberties of the Subject, &c.* 4. And laſtly, The Solemn League and Covenant, wherein we with hands lifted up to the moſt high God do ſwear thus, *We ſhall with the ſame ſincerity, reallity and conſtancy, in our ſeveral Vocations, endeavor with our eſtates and lives, mutually, to preſerve the Rights and Priviledges of the Parliament, and the Liberties of the Kingdom, and to preſerve and defend the Kings Majeſties Perſon and Authority, in the Preſervation and Defence of the true Religion, and Liberties of the Kingdoms, that the world may bear witneſs with our Conſciences of our Loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminiſh his Majeſties juſt power or greatneſs.* And it deſerves to be remembred, that the Parliament, at their entring into the Vow and Proteſtation, did it upon an apprehenſion, that our Government was in danger of undermining, and laid down their ſenſe thereof as one ſpecial ground of making the ſame, (m) and both entered and led the people into it expreſly for the prevention of ſuch a deſign, adding to the tye of civil duty, the religious bond of this Vow and Proteſtation, for the firmer obliging of our allegiance to the Government: And in the inſtructions for the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant throughout the Kingdom, *Art.* 10. there is an Exhortation ordered to be made to all ſorts of perſons to take it, *as that which they judg not only lawful, but (all things conſidered) exceeding expedient, and neceſſary for all that wiſh well to Religion, the King and Kingdom to joyn in.*

(m) In the Preamble, *and finding alſo that there have been, & having juſt cauſe to ſuſpect that there ſtill are, even during the ſitting in Parliament, endeavors to ſubvert the fundamental Laws of* England *and* Ireland, *and to introduce the exerciſe of an Arbitrary and Tyrannical Government by moſt pernicious and wicked councels, practiſes, plots and conſpiracies &c.*

From these three Considerations, as Premises, we infer:

First, There's no place, need or occasion for such an attempt as is the abolishing of the old, and rearing a new model of Government.

1. Say, that some invested with the Government have been faulty, that's no ground for changing the Government, if it be, we may run through all forms of policy, and stay in none, but still be changing, for men will still be found failing; our Government being lawful and good, our course is (as to this case) to pray that our Magistrates may be good, as we are required by the Apostle (*n*), for unless it please God to give us just and godly Magistrates, the best Constitution will nothing avail us, and if that were obtained, that which we have would serve our turn.

n 1 Tim. 2 1, 2

2. Say, that such deep wounds have been given lately to our Government in the persons of those in which it was inherent, as that the influence of it into the body politique may be for a time suspended, yet we cannot think that the Kingdom it self is thereby beheaded of its Government, if that Maxime we have often heard of [*The King never dyes*] be true, and that Act for the continuance of the Parliament, till it dissolve it self, be still a Law, we cannot but conceive we have a Government actually invested, and however it is, who can deny but still there is an obligation and right in us to the Government? And as it is a far easier way to restore the former Government to its natural course, then to remove it, and settle another; so we believe, if we of this Nation shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will raise it up again. We observe (if we understand the *Remonstrance* of his Excellency &c. of *Novemb.* 20. and the *Declaration* of *Novemb.* 30, and the humble Answer of *January* 3. and the Petition before this Agreement,) that the late proceedings against those in the seat of Authority were asserted, and put on as necessary, in order to the matter of this Agreement, and if so, the said matter cannot be necessary by vertue of those proceedings; desperate and successive things cannot really and innocently make each other necessary. And indeed until the composers of this Agreement prove the fundamental change of Goverment in it simply necessary, (which hitherto they have not (that we know of) assayed to do) the pretence of necessity for the aforesaid proceedings, so far as it was built upon their tendency to this end, stands unsupported, which

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we the rather point at, for that in the humble Answer aforesaid we find acknowledged, *That the late proceedings against the Parliament Members was a course in it self irregular, and not justifiable, but both by honest intentions for publique good, and an extraordinary necessity for the same end leading thereunto.* Now if the changes in this Agreement be that end, and publique good, and they prove not at all necessary, (no nor lawful, as we hope to manifest) the extraordinary necessity pretended thence for these proceedings vanisheth into nothing. All that is particularly said for the needfulness of any thing in this Agreement, that we have met with, is layd down, *pag.* 8. *Since therefore our former oppressions, and not yet ended troubles, have been occasioned, either by want of frequent National Meetings in Councel, or by the undue or unequal Constitution thereof, or by rendering those Meetings ineffectual, We are fully agreed, &c.* But the superstructure that follows upon this reason (to wit the change of Government) is too large for this Foundation, the provisions do far out-reach the grievances, which might easily (yea and we think only) be remedied, the Government standing as it doth, especially the two of those three evils which are (to our thoughts) important, the dis-continuance and ineffectualness of Parliaments, and for the former already provision hath been made since this Parliament, and no doubt what remains necessary to be done against any of those evils, the Parliament would carefully provide for, as appertaining to self preservation.

Secondly, Such an attempt would be very unsafe and full of danger, were there any occasion or appearance of need for such an undertaking, yea it would be a very rash and impolitick course, and prudence would forbid it; the experience of all ages may instruct us how perillous a thing it is to go about to innovate or make an alteration in Government: and how much better it is for a people to bear with many inconveniences in a setled State, then to run upon the mischiefs that usually and almost inevitably attend such a change. When the ten Tribes revolted from under *Rehoboams* Government, for the burthensomness of his fathers reign, and because his was threatened to be more heavy; they got no ease nor other advantage by that revolt, but (together with the loss of their Religion and their God) they involved themselves in a sea of miseries, never enjoyed any good Government,

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but through many changes, and at last by revolting from under *Shalmaneser* King of *Assyria* they brought themselves to utter ruine.

3dly, What ever power of taking away and new forming Government is conceived to rest in the People, yet it is all one as to us our Oaths, Vows, Protestation, and Covenant considered, by which we have fast bound our hands from the use of such a Freedom (were there any such originally residing in us,) these Oaths and Covenants which we have taken are to us far more restringent and strongly engaging to keep to our present Government, then any secular respects can be to put on a change, in as much as the satisfying of those conduceth to the good or peace of the Soul & Conscience; the prosecution of these reflecteth only upon a temporary Commodity. If the People of this Land, that are within any of these religious bonds, shall attempt either wholy to take away the King, the House of Lords, and the ancient Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses of the House of Commons, or any of them, or diminish any thing that is matter of power, honor, or priviledg from any of them, then when they swore or protested, inherent in them, or put any power in themselves, which they cannot have but by some substraction from the Rights either of King or Parliament, how can they be clear from the great wickedness of perjury, or Vow-violation? So that these Vows, Oaths, and Covenants being upon us (as we beleeve all are upon many, and some at lest upon most of the people of this Kingdom) if this Agreement shall indeed be carryed on, and tendered to us, each of us (that are within any of them) may answer to the offer of it in the words of *Jephthah*, *Judg.* 11.35. *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.* Let but the nature of an Oath be weighed, In swearing we call God for a record upon our souls, and appeal to him to be a witness and judg of our truth and reallity in the Oath, by manifesting himself either in mercy, or judgment, according as we either with sincere or treacherous intentions undertake, and according as we either firmly keep or perfidiously break the Oath: and dare any of us be such God-contemners, and self-destroyers, as wittingly, or purposely, to violate our Oaths? If any unrighteousness or sin had born the subject of these Vows, Oaths, and Covenants, we might be allowed, yea bound to repentance, and revocation of them that were such, but no such thing

thing hath been or can be once alledged againſt any of them: We wonder that the Framers of this Agreement are in it ſo liberal in providing for the liberty of Conſcience (as they term it) in matter of Religion, and yet are ſo ſilent in the reſolution of Conſcience in this point of Religion, which is publique enough for them to take notice of, and may (we beleeve) concern their, as well as our conſciences. Say there were ſome inconveniences (though we finde none in the ſubſtantials of our Government) yet we, having devoted our ſelves thus unto it, cannot alter any thing expreſt in theſe Engagements, without impiety, to be abhorred. *A righteous man ſweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not, Pſa.* 15. 4. The League which *Joſhua* made with the *Gibeonites*, and the Princes of the Congregation ſware to, though it proved to be to the publique loſs and prejudice, they might not break, and they anſwered the Congregation that murmured againſt them for it, thus, *We have ſworn unto them by the Lord God of Iſrael, now therefore we may not touch them: We will even let them live, leſt wrath be upon us, becauſe of the Oath which we ſware unto them, Joſh.*9,15,&c. And when *Saul*, four hundred years after this, *in his zeal to the children of Iſrael and Judah, had ſlain the Gibeonites, there was a famine in the days of David three years* (*Saul* being dead) *for that his bloody fact; and ſeven of Sauls ſons were hanged up before the Lord, ere God was entreated for the Land, 2 Sam.* 21. God hath heard our Vows (*o*), and though men do not inſiſt on, or would diſcharge us of them, yet the Lord our God will ſurely require them of us (*p*): *A falſe Oath* is one of the ſpecial things that *he hateth* (*q*). He hath ſaid, *he will come near to men in judgment*, and will be a ſwift witneſs againſt falſe ſwearers (*r*). *Zedekiah* the King of *Judah*, being made by *Nebuchadnezzar* the King of *Babylon* to ſwear fealty to him, though he was a forreign and heatheniſh Prince, and though the ſubjection was diſadvantageous to him, and tended to *make the Kingdom baſe, that it might not lift up it ſelf*; yet *Zedekiah* breaking this Oath, and rebelling againſt *Nebuchadnezzar*, the Lord ſent his Prophet with theſe tydings; *Shall he proſper? Shall he eſcape that doth ſuch things? Or ſhall he break the Covenant and be delivered?* Nay, upon this his breach of Oath, the Lord himſelf ſwears thus, *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, ſurely in the place where the King dwelleth that made*

o Pſa. 61. 5.

p Deut. 23.21.
q Zech. 8.17.

r Mal. 3. 5.

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him King, whose Oath he despised, and whose Covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon he shall dye; neither shall Pharoah with his mighty Army, and great company, make for him: Seeing he despised the Oath by breaking the Covenant, when lo he had given his hand, and hath done all these things, he shall not escape: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As I live, surely mine Oath that he hath despised, and my Covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompence upon his own head (s).

s Ezek. 17.12

And again, when *Zedekiah*, the Princes, and people of *Jerusalem*, had made a Covenant before the Lord in his house, to proclaim Liberty, and let their Hebrew servants go out free, after their seven years service, according to the Law and Covenant of the Lord, and had done accordingly; but afterwards, upon the retreat of the King of *Babylons* Army from them, they had caused their servants, whom they had set at liberty, to return, and brought them again into subjection, the Prophet thus denounceth against them from the Lord, *Therefore, thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor; behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the Kingdoms of the earth: and I will give the men that have transgressed my Covenant, which have not performed the words of the Covenant which they had made before me; I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and their dead bodies shall be for meat to the fowls of the heavens, and to the beasts of the earth* (t).

t Jerem. 34.17 &c.

Now in this our case (which with the inversion of the terms may be paralel'd to theirs) if we, having covenanted subjection to the Authority set over us, when we were in fears and dangers, shall, when our fears are over, cast off that subjection, and proclaim to our selves liberty from it, and presume to abrogate the Government we have covenanted to preserve, we provoke the Lord to pass the same sentence upon us.

They that hold forth this Agreement to us, say, in the Title, it is *an Agreement for a secure and present Peace, upon Grounds of common Right, Freedom and Safety.* But by this Scripture, we know not how otherwise to stile it, then an Agreement for sure and (it may probably be) present trouble and misery: and if it

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go on to be a National Compact indeed, we doing the same things with *Zedekiah* and his people, if we have ears to hear, we may hear the Lord pronouncing the same things upon us which he did upon them; *Behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine.* This is the Freedom, and not that which the Agreement speaks of, which we shall purchase by it: And we earnestly wish that we may not put the Lord to it, as those rebellious Jews did, when he said of them, *Jer.*44.28. *And all the remnant of Judah shall know, whose word shall stand, mine or theirs.* And as for common Right, which is another thing the Title of the Book holds forth, we may gather what Right we may expect by it, should it be establish'd, by our Covenant-breaking; if we look into another Prophet, to wit, *Hosea*, cap. 10.4. *They have spoken words, swearing falsly in making a Covenant; thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.* When we look into the tendency of this Agreement, and withal observe the posture in which it is published, before it a *Petition* to the honorable the Commons of *England*, and behinde it a *Declaration* to the People of *England*, in both which it is with plausible terms and Rhetorical insinuations flourished over and set forth; we remember and make bold to put in mind all persons, named or concerned in it, of that flying roul in *Zechariahs* Vision, the length whereof is twenty cubits, and the bredth thereof ten cubits, and the meaning of it is thus given by the Angel, *This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side, according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side, according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the theef, and into the house of him that sweareth falsly by my name; and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof (v).* And let the spreading of this roul, and the pronouncing of this curse, warn and deter us all, that those very hands which were lift up to the most high God, in our swearing to preserve the Government we are under, be not lift up against, or made instruments to pull it down, lest we involve our selves thereby in the large, lasting, and consuming curse of that roul which the Lord of hosts undertakes to bring forth, and execute

Jerem. 44.28

Hosea 10. 4.

v Zech. 5.2,3,4

upon every one where ever, upon the face of the whole earth, that doth ſuch a thing; ſo that if we fall under this guilt, *though we ſhould make a Covenant with Death, and an Agreement with Hell, it ſhall not ſtand; but when the overflowing ſcourge paſſeth through, we ſhall be troden down by it* (x).

x Iſa. 28. 15, 18

And here, having ſo much inſiſted on the ſtrongly obliging force of our Oaths and Covenants taken, we cannot refrain our ſelves from expreſſing a little, what great heavineſs and continual ſorrow we have in our hearts for the little care that's taken by the people generally of theſe their Oaths and Covenants, the common prevaricating and departing of many from the ſeveral endeavors engaged to, in them, upon any temptation, either of advantage offered, or danger and trouble threatened, and the remiſſneſs, backwardneſs, and indifferency of ſpirit in all (we excuſe not our ſelves in this) in relation to the duties of them. But eſpecially we know not how to hide or hold in the ſorrow and ſhame that, even unto horror, hath filled our hearts and faces, upon occaſion of the late proceedings, both thoſe againſt the ſecluded and impriſoned Members of Parliament, and thoſe againſt the perſon of the King deceaſed; we not knowing how to clear them from manifeſt diſloyalty and breach of Covenant, and when we would comfort our ſelves with this, that our ſouls have not come into the ſecrets of, or been united in any ſociety with thoſe actions, but ever abhorred them; our hearts are yet faint within us, when we conſider, how, upon theſe proceedings, our Chriſtian and Proteſtant profeſſion, the Way, and common Cauſe we have ſtood for, the endeavored Reformation, and the National Covenant, we with others have entered into, are reproached: *Oh tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Askelon, leſt the daughters of the Philiſtins rejoyce, leſt the daughters of the uncircumciſed triumph.*

2 Sam. 1. 20.

But having delivered our ſenſe in this firſt part of the whole frame, and general drift of the book, we proceed to that which we propoſed for our ſecond part; the examination of the nineth Section of this Agreement, which concerneth Religion; we have ſeen its contrivements in humane or civil matters, let us now ſee how it would deſpoſe in the matters of God; and truly in this reſpect we may ſay to the promoters of it, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpake to *Ahaz* the King, *Hear ye now, is it a ſmall thing for you*

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to weary men, but will ye weary my God also (a)? In speaking to this Section we shall 1. dissect it, sentence by sentence, denoting, as we go, the flaws or faults we observe in it; 2. Lay down some of our Reasons against what we take to be the main import or project of it, to wit, the dissettlement and free intermixture of Religion. a Isai. 7. 13.

This Section of Religion is divided into four heads, whereof we shall examine particularly the three first.

It is intended, that Christian Religion be held forth and recommended as the publike Profession in this Nation. 1. How reservedly, sparingly, fearfully doth this Agreement own Religion? as if it were jealous of engaging men to it, it dare not injoyn, no nor resolve firmly on it, only it adventures to intend it; a word that enacts, or puts not anything in being, imports nothing but a wavering irresolvedness and mutability. 2. How doubtfully doth it hold forth Religion? Here's no restriction to true Christian Religion, although there are so many, & so extreamly differing ways of Religion which assume the title of Christian; yea instead of such a necessary restriction here's a plain implication, (in that only Popery and Prelacy are excepted from being thus held forth,) That any Religion (Popery and Prelacy excluded) may be the publique Profession. 3. How pretendedly and meerly in shew doth it hold forth the profession of Christian Religion? for in the three following Heads it leaves practise free, and what gross hypocrisie is this? If a man should propound to himself, and declare to others that he would profess Christian Religion, but he would leave himself a freedom to practise any way, live as his list, were not this in him the most deliberate, wilful and perfect hypocrisie that can be imagined? And is it not so in a Nation? yet this is the Agreements Profession. 4. Is not *this holding forth of Christian Religion as the publique Profession*, being compared with the rest of this Section, a self-contradiction? for if *none shal be compelled to the publique profession*, but may cast it off if they will, as in the second Head; and if men may both profess and practise differently from that which (it's said) shall be publiquely held forth, as in the third Head; if this liberty be generally made use of, what becomes of the publique profession? how is it held forth? and by whom? And suppose it not grown to that, yet this Agreement neither tells us who it intends shall hold it forth, nor by what acts or means it shall be held forth; Agreem. 1.

but on the contrary, denies the Repreſentatives *to have the high-*
Pag. 14. part. 8 *eſt and final Judgment concerning things Spiritual or Evangeli-*
cal; and conſequently it cannot be done by them: and for a Church Repreſentative, or National Synod, or any other way of holding forth a publique Profeſſion, here is not the leaſt ſillable, but contrary wiſe proviſions that make it morally impoſſible to be done.

Agreem. *Which we deſire may by the grace of God be reformed to the greateſt purity, in Doctrine, Worſhip, and Diſcipline, according to the Word of God.* 1. Here are none nominated, encouraged, or authorized to take this work in hand, and we apprehend the Repreſentatives, being not to have *the judgment of things Spiritual or Evangelical*, are diſ-enabled to do, or ſet others about it. 2. But in the three following Heads there are full promiſes, that men may (if they will) live unreformed, yea lay aſide the very face and profeſſion of Religion, or deform the Church of God in Doctrine, Worſhip or Diſcipline, without controul. 3. We have Covenanted a Reformation in all theſe; but is this hollow deſire, with long actual grants of the contrary following it, all the keeping and performing of our Covenant that is intended? It is no marvel thoſe words are left out [according to the example of the beſt reformed Churches,] for ſuch a Reformation as this, is without example or pattern in any Church or age. 4. It is Reformation according to the Word of God, That the Magiſtrate ſuppreſs the preaching of falſe doctrines, and exerciſe of falſe Religion, and that he command men to ſerve the Lord, according to his own inſtitution, and bring men to the means of their Salvation, which the following particulars deny him power to do.

Agreem. *The inſtructing of the people whereunto in a publique way, (ſo it be not compulſive,) as alſo the maintaining of able Teachers for that end, and for the confutation or diſcovery of Hereſie, Error, and whatſoever is contrary to ſound doctrine, is allowed to be provided for by our Repreſentatives.* 1. Here is mention of able Teachers for the inſtructing of the people in Chriſtian Religion, but not a word of a Church or Miniſtry for this, or for the building up of thoſe that are inſtructed, or for the offering up of the publique Worſhip, the adminiſtration of the Sacraments and Diſcipline: Muſt we have none of theſe things provided for? Muſt they be laid aſide, until that faint deſire, without hands or endeavors, work out a Reformation? Or muſt theſe be diſpenſed

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by any body? Here then is a Christian Religion without Church, Ministry, Sacraments or Discipline. 2. Here is confutation and discovery of Heresie, &c. spoken of, but no Church Censures, or Authority placed in any to purge them out of the Church. 3. Here is compulsive instruction prohibited; the meaning of which we take to be, that none shall be compelled to repair to the publique meetings for instruction, or to behave themselves orderly therein; so that neither Magistrate, parent or master shall bring those under them to the means of their salvation, but give them the reins to run on in ignorance, and all damnable ways. This one clause, if followed, is a lesson that may more instruct men to irreligion and irreformedness, and more unteach men the Christian Religion, then all the able Teachers, here allowed to be provided for by the Representatives, can prevail to instruct them to it. 4. Here is not so much care taken to promote the Religion, which is intended publiquely to be held forth, as there is of giving advantage to other ways differing from it in the following Heads; for here the instruction of people unto the publique Religion, and providing Teachers for that end, is put off, and referred to the Representatives; but the liberty of deserting it, and both professing, and practising contrary to it, is presently granted and enacted; and the Laws, Statutes and Ordinances, contrary to that liberty, are repealed.

The maintenance of which Teachers may be out of a publique Treasury, and we desire not by Tythes. For this, we being in hand with matter of Religion, and this being but of a temporal concernment, and that our own, we shall not insist on it: We expect to suffer in such things, and think it but suitable when our Religion it self is thus dealt with, as in this Agreement; only seeing that in this very page it saith, *No Representative shall in any wise level mens estates, destroy property, &c.* We mind it, to see that it agree with it self.

Provided, That Popery and Prelacy be not held forth as the publique way or profession in this Nation. 1. They are so much the more beholding to this Agreement, the ways that are not thus held forth being better provided for, as we shall see presently. 2. Then, any or all other ways of Religion, called Christian, are, or may be held forth as the publique way or profession, besides Popery and Prelacy; here then is a profession of Religion of a wide latitude,

latitude, and of a ſtrange party-coloured, and jarring compoſure, more like to the mixture of the cup in the hand of the great Whore of *Babylon*, or to the many headed and horned beaſt ſhe ſits on, *Revel.* 17. then to the pure and uniform Religion of the chaſte Spouſe of Chriſt. 3. Why are theſe two only excepted, is it becauſe theſe are the worſt of all? doubtleſs there are other doctrines and ways that are held forth among us, or may be introduced as bad as the worſt points of Popery, & ten thouſand times worſe then Prelacy, ſuch as theſe of the *Antiſcripturiſts*, *Antitrinitarians*, *Arrians*, *Pelagians*, *&c.* 4. Why are they only excluded from being the publique profeſsion? If they may be allowed to be profeſſed and practiſed, why may they not be comprehended under the notion of the publique profeſsion, as well, at leaſt, as ſome other differing ways? If they be too dangerous or noxious for that notion, why are they not wholly exterminated? they may hurt as well, if they be permitted, as private profeſsions.

2 Head. *That to the publique Profeſſion ſo held forth none be compelled by penalties, or otherwiſe, but only may be endeavored to be won by ſound doctrine, and the example of a good Converſation.* 1. To the profeſſion of Chriſtian Religion none among us have been or are deſired to be compelled, but it hath been, and ſtill is judged, a neceſſary courſe to cauſe men that profeſs the Chriſtian Religion to carry towards it anſwerably, to bring men to the means of the knowledg of it, and to reſtrain men from publique ſcandalizing of it. 2. Compulſion by Penalties, or otherwiſe here forbidden, may include the Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures of the Church, the exerciſe of the power of parents over their children, and of maſters over their ſervants, in reference to duties of Religion, and the rather, becauſe it is ſaid, they only may be endeavored to be won by ſound doctrine, &c. which words are excluſive of all other ways. 3. Here then (if this ſhould ſtand) men might become Atheiſts, Recuſants, Sabbath-breakers, Blaſphemers, or what they will, and no man ſay to them, what doſt thou? The former Court connivance of Popery, the prelatical indulgence of prophaneneſs, the Kings book for ſports on the Lords Day ſo much cryed out upon ſince this Parliament, were but ſmall Gnats to the ſwallowing down of this; a horrible thing to be enacted in a Kingdom ſo generally chriſtianized as this is. 4. Then may no Court or Magiſtrate conſtrain men to take an oath (ſuch as is uſed among

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us) becauſe in ſo doing he profeſſeth Chriſtian Religion. 5. How ſhould men be won to Chriſtian Religion by ſound doctrine, and good Converſation, when no proviſion is made to bring, or keep doctrine to be ſound, and converſation to be religious.

That ſuch as profeſs faith in God by Jeſus Chriſt (however differing in judgment from the Doctrine, Worſhip, or Diſcipline, publiquely held forth as aforeſaid,) ſhall not be reſtrained from, but ſhall be protected in the profeſſion of their faith, and exerciſe of Religion, according to their conſciences. 1. Thus all the damnable Hereſies, Doctrines of Devils, Idolatrous, Superſtitious, and abominable Religions that ever have been broached, or practiſed, or can be deviſed (if the perſons owning them will but profeſs faith in God by Jeſus Chriſt) are ſet at liberty in this Kingdom; nay not only granted a Toleration, but enfranchiſement, yea protection and patronage, and that in groſs, without conſidering or knowing what is ſo allowed, and taken into Tutelage. 2. Although here is a diſtinction uſed betwixt the Doctrine, Worſhip and Diſcipline publiquely held forth, and other ways differing from them, yet the deſerters of, and contrary profeſſors and practiſers to the publique profeſſion have as much favor granted them (as to ſecure practiſe) as they have that embrace it, nay more. 1. None are forbidden to compel by penalties, or otherwiſe, to any profeſſion of Faith, or exerciſe of Religion, that is differing from the publique, how groſs ſoever it be in it ſelf, or oppoſite to it, only men may not be compelled to the publique. 2. None are prohibited to reſtrain any from the publique Religion, only men may not reſtrain from the Heterodox, or differing ways, though never ſo corrupt. 3. No protection is granted to thoſe of the publique profeſſion; men may thruſt themſelves into the publique Aſſemblies, violate the Ordinances of them, and no remedy for it; men may profeſs the publique Religion at their perils, but the differing ways muſt be protected. 3. It were much more to the honor of the Name and Faith of God, if this liberty muſt be afforded, that men might have it without profeſſing Faith in God by Jeſus Chriſt, for the worſt in the world will verbally profeſs thus much to obtain ſuch a liberty if they have need of it, and by their profeſſing thus, when as both their real profeſſion, and their practiſe denyeth, oppoſeth and reproacheth the Faith in God by Jeſus Chriſt, the Name of God, and of Chriſt, and the true Faith are but the more blaſphemed and vilified. 3 Head.

Agreem. *In any place (except ſuch as ſhall be ſet apart for the publique worſhip, where we provide not for them unleſs they have leave.)* 1. As you provide not for them, ſo you prohibit them not the place of the publique Worſhip, but rather by adding that reſervation, *unleſs they have leave*, you make them capable of it, only they muſt carry favor with them that can give leave, and then ask and have. 2. If they (to wit, the diſſenters from the publique, and advancers of another different profeſſion of Religion) may have leave, and upon it enjoy the places of publique Worſhip, then may they by encreaſing their number come to juſtle out the publique profeſſion, and then that which in the firſt head was propounded to be held forth and recommended, ceaſeth to be the publique profeſsion, and inſtead of being held forth, is put forth adoors. 3. Were this a real exception, and might not be remitted by leave, yet it is little or no abatement of the liberty, or prevention of the growth of a way to be denyed the publique, if it may have free paſſage in any other place, yea if it find followers enough (as, if it be bad enough, it is likely to do) it may become as publique as that which hath that name, it being the concourſe of people, and not the place which makes any action or ſociety publique.

Agreem. *So as they abuſe not this liberty to the civil injury of others, or to actual diſturbance of the publique peace on their parts.* Civil injury then of men, and breach of outward worldly peace, muſt by all means be prevented, and rather Religion confined then it incurred, ſuch miſcarriages may nullifie this liberty, but ſpiritual, yea divine injury, the diſturbance of the Churches, and conſciences peace and wealth muſt be let paſs, yea protected.

Agreem. *Nevertheleſs it is not intended to be hereby provided, that this liberty ſhall neceſſarily extend to Popery or Prelacy.* This clauſe (as the former) would make a countenance of being an exception, but indeed is none; for as it doth not ſay, that theſe two ſhall be excluded from this liberty, ſo it leaves it Arbitrary, that it may extend to them, and conſequently leaves no authority in any to reſtrain them from it; if any in the place of Magiſtracy ſhould go about to abridg them of this liberty, they might ſoon plead, where is your authority? The Agreement prohibits it not, it only ſaith, *this liberty ſhall not neceſſarily extend to us*, but never any Law forbade a thing in theſe terms, *it ſhall not*

neceſſarily

neceſſarily be. The ſame, though it be not expreſt, muſt needs be granted of all other ways, to which this liberty is intended; it is not neceſſary it ſhould extend to this or that, becauſe it is not neceſſary that this or that ſhould be.

And becauſe the exceptions that we have noted by the way, upon looking into them, appear to us to be of no reallity at all, but may be inſerted as colours and ſhadows to blind the eyes of men eaſie of belief, and to make them think thoſe more generally diſtaſted and exploded ways *Popery and Prelacy* are quite caſhier'd from having freedom, and that others are much confined by excluſion from the *places ſet apart for the publique profeſſion.* We ſhall yet further give notice to the Reader, that theſe pretended exceptions (as to that purpoſe) are but void and frivolous terms, meer nothing, and that notwithſtanding them, Popery and Prelacy ſtand as free to be practiſed as any other different ways, and thoſe other different ways are as capable (if they can but get head or favor) of the publique places, yea of the ſtile of being *held forth as the publique profeſſion in the Nation*, as any one that may ſeem at this day to have the property thereof. For 1. The ſecond and third particulars of this Section are *pag.* 27. and 28. declared to be *fundamental to our Common Right, Liberty and Safety*, and there being nothing poſitive in them to exclude either Popery or Prelacy from liberty and protection therein provided, or any different ways from the publique places, (as hath been noted) they ſtand inviolably by this Agreement entitled thereunto, and in caſe any Repreſentative ſhould take in hand to reſtrain them, they may lawfully by force of arms make reſiſtance againſt the Repreſentative, *pag.* 27. *part.* 10. of this Agreement; yea this being a fundamental, all they that joyn in and ſubſcribe the Agreement, bind themſelves to maintain them in it, *pag.* 28. 2. Suppoſe there were ſomething in theſe ſeeming exceptions, yet it vaniſheth into nothing; for if the Papiſts, Prelatiſts, or any other, do exceed them, none can take cognizance of it, or offer to reduce them into the limits of theſe exceptions, for all Repreſentatives are forbidden the higheſt and final judgment in Spiritual or Evangelical things, and if ſo, then all other Judicatories and Magiſtrates muſt needs be denyed ſubordinate judgment or cognizance of ſuch things, under which all the aberrations in this matter are comprehended, yea, and by this means any other Religion that cannot

be shrowded under a *Profession of Faith in God by Jesus Christ*, as Judaism, Turcism, Paganism, may yet settle it self, and enjoy freedom amongst us by this Agreement, if it err only in Spiritual and Evangelical things, in as much as there is none that hath power of judgment over it to suppress it. We have but a word or two more by way of observation on this Section of Religion.

We cannot but take notice, that the *holding forth and recommending of Christian Religion, as the publique profession in this Nation, is laid down*, not as fundamental to our Common Right, Liberty and Safety, but only *as useful and good for the publique*, *pag.*28. whereas the second and third particulars (wherein Liberty from the profession of that Christian Religion, and for a different profession and practise from it is provided for) are laid down *as fundamental to our Common Right, Freedom and Safety*, so that by this Agreement, Christian Religion, as to the Foundation of a Kingdom, is a *stone set at naught by these builders*, though it deserve to be *the head of the corner*; whilst Liberty to desert that Religion, and positively to profess and practise in opposition to it, Liberty of Irreligion, Idolatry, Superstition, Blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, Seduction, Schism, is of the Foundation, sure the edifice must needs be a *Babel*, or confusion, a principal part of the Foundation whereof is such a Liberty as this; it must needs be a rotten building, where Liberty to fundamental Error is of the Foundation.

Acts 4.11.

Once more, it is said, as you see noted, that this *Liberty is fundamental to our Common Right, Freedom and Safety*; but let us ask what equity there is in a liberty to iniquity? In a liberty to dishonor and injure, the Name, Truth and Ordinances of God, to infect and destroy the Church of Christ, and the souls of men? What freedom is it to wander and run a whoring from God, to be led captive by ignorance, error and unrighteousness? And what safety is there to open the fold for *grievous wolves* to enter in, and devour the flock, to give way to the poysonous and eating gangrene of damnable heresie, to spread without any corrasive? And was it noted of *Israel*, *Judg.*5.8. They chose new gods, then was War in the gates?

In the last place we come to lay down Arguments or Reasons, some of many (that might be insisted on) against the relaxation,

or ſetting free of men to Atheiſm, and the full liberty and protection granted to falſe Doctrines and Religions by this Agreement, in this Section.

1. If the Scriptures may be our rule and judg in this matter (and to thoſe that admit of their binding authority and deciſion we only addreſs our ſelves) the ſinfulneſs of ſuch a Toleration, and maintenance of erroneous and irreligious ways, wil clearly appear; 1. By teſtimonies out of the Old Teſtament, wherein there is more found for our direction, becauſe (as we apprehend it) the Governors of *Iſrael*, to whom the Oracles of God were then committed, had in this caſe received the knowledg and worſhip of the true God.

1. By the Commandments which the Lord gave for the ſuppreſſion of Idolatry, and the puniſhing of Idolaters, Blaſpemers, and Sabbath-breakers, *Deut.* 7. 5. 12. 2, 3. 13. 1, 2. *to the end.* 17.2,3,4,5. *Jud.* 2.2. *Exod.* 22.20. 31.14. *Lev.*24.13,14,15, 16. *Exod.*32.26,27. *Num.*15.35.

2. By the approved & binding examples of the people of God, and of godly Magiſtrates aboliſhing and deſtroying the monuments and means of Idolatry, and executing puniſhments upon Idol-Prieſts and Worſhippers, blaſphemers of the living God and profaners of the Sabbath, and commanding and cauſing thoſe under their authority to abandon ſuperſtition, and to embrace the true ſervice of God. *Gen.*18.19. 35.2,3,4. *Exod.*32.28. 1 *King.*18.40. 2 *King.* 10,11,24. 2 *Chron.*14.2,3,4,5. 15.8,12,13,16. 19.4. 23.17. 29.5, *to the end.* 30.5,6,12. 31.1,2, *&c.* 34.3, *to* 9. *& verſ.*32,33. 35.2,3, *&c.* *Ezra* 10.5,7,8. *Neh.*13.9,11,17,19. Yea, Gentile Princes, being convinced of their duty to the true God, have ſtraitly enjoyned his honor and ſervice, and mulcted the contrary, *Ezra* 6.3, to 13. 7.13, to 27. *Dan.*3.29.

3. By condemning and reproving the Toleration of corrupt ways of Religion, 1 *King.*18.21. 2 *Chron.*20.33. *Hoſ.*7.8.

4. By predictions and precepts (appertaining to the times of the Goſpel) holding forth the duty of thoſe that are in civil power to promote Religion, and to puniſh the corrupters thereof by that their power, *Iſa.*49.29. *Zech.*13.3.

And whereas ſome except againſt the validity of thoſe precepts, preſidents, &c. as proper to the Pædagogy of the Law and the Nation of *Iſrael*, and not binding to us now under the Goſpel,

we say to that, 1. Some of those commands and practices were antecedent to the Law given by *Moses*, as that of *Abraham*, *commanding his children, and his houshold after him, to keep the way of the Lord*: and that of *Jacob*, requiring not only his houshold, but all that were with him (amongst whom it is supposed were the captive *Shechemites* taken, in the Chapter preceding, by the sons of *Iacob*, who indeed were likeliest to harbor Idols) *to put away the strange gods that were among them*: And it is very remarkable, that before any Law was given by *Moses* for the punishing of Blasphemers and Sabbath-breakers, yet the people of Israel apprehended, and put in ward, both the Blasphemer, *Levit.*24.12. and the Sabbath-breaker, *Numb.* 15.34. until the minde of the Lord might be shewed them, having so much in them by the light of nature, and the rules of the moral Law they were acquainted with, that such were to be punished. 2. We have no other Institution of Magistracy under the Gospel then that which was before, nor find we in the new Testament any abrogation or alteration of what was before time comitted to the Magistrate, but civil authority continues Gods Ordinance by vertue of that appointment from the beginning; neither is any thing detracted from his commission that was at first in it. 3. No Reason can be assigned, why those evils in Religon should be then punished, and not now; they are no less sins now, then they were then; they are as dishonorable, and hateful to God; and as baneful to the souls of men, now, as they were then. The Reasons given for their punishment then (as that they are very ensnaring if allowed to be among the servants of God; *Iud.* 2. 3. *Exod.*34.12,13. that they tended to *turn men away from the Lord their God*, and to thrust them out of his way, and that to punish them is to *put the evil away from the people*, and to procure that all *Israel may hear and fear, and do no more such wickedness*, *Deut.*13.5,11.) they are moral, and still obtain strength; Error and false Religion have not lost their ensnaring nature, nor are men now more wise and stedfast in the truth then they have been. 4. What is now *fundamental to common right, liberty, and safety*, was so in those former days, and we may not think that the Lord would have given such strict and standing Laws to his people, in matters of Religion, if liberty therein had been indeed fundamental to common right, freedom and safety, as this Agreement pretendeth.

Gen.18.19. Gen.35.2. *Divines Annot. in loc.*

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2. By authorities out of the New Testament.

1. The description of the Magistrates power and duty extendeth to the procurement of good, and avengement of evil indefinitely without any restriction; and there being no limitation of this good, and evil, in this or any other text, we must needs hold to that approved rule of interpreting Scripture, which is not to distinguish, or limit the sence, when the holy Ghost doth not.

2. The duty of Christians, in relation to their Rulers, is, *to pray for them*, (to wit, for their Coversion, as appears by *v.*3,4.) that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: A Christian Magistrate then as such (and consequently by the power of his Magistracy) is to assist, and promote, not only honesty and justice towards man, but godliness and piety towards God. 1 Tim. 2. 1,2

3. Parents and Masters of Families, whose power is of the same nature (that is, civil and external) with that of the Magistrate, they are enjoyned to exclude and expel *out of their houses false Teachers*, and then by Analogy, or proportion, the Magistrates are to prosecute such, and exterminate them out of their state. No Reason can be yeelded why the less extensive and inferior power should be thus tyed, and impowered, to oppose Hereticks, and not the larger and superior of the Magistrate: only the Apostle might forbear to mention it of the Magistrates, they being at that time generally unchristian. 2 Joh. v. 10.

4. The Holy Ghost foretelleth, that those *ten Kings which do first give their power and strength unto the beast, and do make war with the Lamb, being overcome by him, shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire*; that is, shall destroy the *Roman Antichrist, or Rome Antichristian*; and that not only as *the beast*, having civil dominion, but as *the great whore*, (that is) *as a corrupter of Religion, by lyes and idolatry*; *and a seducer of the Kings and inhabiters of the earth to her false Religion*: But how shall they lawfully do this, if Kings and States have no sword, power, or duty to command, enforce, and punish, in the cause of Religion. Rev. 17. 12, 13 14, 16 Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

2. Having thus (we hope) sufficiently confirmed the unwarrantableness of such a manumission, and protection of irreligion, false

false doctrine, and perverse ways, by Scripture authority, we shall for a close tender to consideration:

1. How can those Caveats, given us by *our blessed Saviour, and his Apostles, To beware of false Prophets; To take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadduces; To mark them which cause divisions, and offences, contrary to the doctrine received, and to avoyd them: If any man preach any other Gospel, then that We have received, to Anathematize him: To beware of dogs, evil workers, and of the concision: To keep our selves from Idols:* and many others. How can the observation, and the practice of these, and a subscription, and grant of such a liberty, consist together?

Matth. 7. 15. Cap. 16 6. Rom. 16. 17. Gal. 1. 9. Phil. 2. 2. 1 Joh. 5 21.

2. How can we do this, and yet be true to our Covenant, wherein we stand bounden *sincerely, really and constantly to endeavor, in our several places and callings, the Reformation of Religion, in the Kingdoms of England, and Ireland, in doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government: To bring the Churches of God, in the three Kingdoms, to the neerest Conjunction and Uniformity in Religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church-Government, and Catechising; That We shall in like manner, Without respect of persons, endeavor the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresie, Schism, Profaness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine, and the power of godliness?*

Artic. 1, & 2.

3. In doing this thing shall we not fail, desert, and give up that Cause for which defensive Arms were taken up by the Parliament and Kingdom; for the maintenance of which so many lives have been adventured, so much blood hath been spilt, such miseries have been waded through in the late Wars, yea, so many prayers put up, and Fasts publique and private observed, *one main* (if not the first and principal) part of which Cause was *the Vindication and Defence of Religion?* And shall we thus improve and requite all the wonderful successes and deliverances wherewith the Lord of hostes hath owned, and pleaded this Cause for us, and answered our desires therein?

See Declarat. of both Kingdoms, 1643.

4. What advantage would this liberty give to our, and religions enemies, to open their mouthes in reproaches, & blasphemy against our way; who have formerly objected against us, That our designe was to promote private fancies, to introduce a multiformity

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of Religion, and to ſubvert Magiſtracy; and whom we have charged with *a cup filled up to the brim of Apoſtacy, Atheiſm, Idolatry, Blaſphemies, and Profaneſs?* Decla. of both Kingdoms. p. 4

5. Shall we not aſperſe all the penal Laws of the Land, and all the judicial proceedings that have been upon them ſince the Reformation againſt Seminary Prieſts, Jeſuits, and Papiſts, or any other, juſtly ſuffering in matter of Religion, as acts of higheſt injuſtice, being againſt *the Fundamentals of common Right, Freedom, and Safety?*

Laſtly, Will not this Liberty, reduced into practice, be in danger, not only to deface, defile, rend, and crumble to nothing our Churches, but to fill the Kingdom full of Factions and Tumults, and tend to the overthrow of the Magiſtrates power in civil things, and that men having once got head, and immunity in the things of God, will proceed to introduce a lawleſneſs and impunity in humane Intereſts; the Commandments of both Tables being ſo united and enwreathed in one, that they ſtand and fall together, and the violation of one hath an influence upon all; and it being ſo eaſie for men willing to err, to entitle any civil extravagancy, not only to Conſcience, but to Faith and Religion? Iames 2. 10.

We have thus, in the uprightneſs of our hearts, delivered our Judgment concerning this Agreement, and Subſcription to it; not affecting Diviſion, or Faction, but vehemently deſiring and ſeeking a religious Peace, and right agreement of the people; not intending any diſreſpective reflexion upon the perſons of any, but heartily deſiring the true honor and happineſs of all; and endeavoring, according to our places, to prevent the great evils that we pre-apprehend will enſue, if this Agreement ſhould be carried on. As for us, *we ſhall not* (we truſt) *ſin againſt the Lord, in ceaſing to pray for you* our dear Flocks, and the reſt of the Churches of Chriſt in theſe Kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland*, that he would direct your courſe in this caſe of ſo weighty and fundamental an importance: *and we have herein endeavored to ſhew you the good and the right way:* And having layd before you thoſe Grounds upon which *we profeſs our diſagreement and diſſent to the Book* called *the Agreement of the People:* We teſtifie the ſame by underwriting our names. 1 Sam. 12. 23.

Richard Heyrick Warden of *Chriſts*

false doctrine, and perverse ways, by Scripture authority, we shall for a close tender to consideration:

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Richard Heyrick Warden of *Chriſts*

Colledg in *Manchester*.
Richard Hollinworth Fellow of the said Colledg.
William Walker Minister there.
Alexander Horrocks Minister in the *Dean* parish.
John Tilsley Pastor at *Dean*.
William Alt } Ministers of the Go-
Toby Forness } spel at *Bury*.
Robert Bathe Pastor of the Church at *Rachdale*.
James Hyet Pastor at *Croston*.
William Ward Min. of the Gospel at *Walton*.
Thomas Johnson Pastor of *Halsal*.
Edward Woolmer Min. of *Flixton*.
Thomas Cranage Pastor of *Brindle*.
James Wood Pastor at *Asshton* in *Makerfield*.
Edward Fleetwood Pastor at *Kirkam*.
John Angier Pastor of *Denton*.
Thomas Pyke Pastor of *Radcliff*.

John

John Harriſon Paſtor of the Church at *Aſhton-underline*,
Jonathan Scholefield Min. at *Heywood*
Thomas Holland Paſtor of *Ringley*.
Robert Conſtantine Paſtor of *Oldham*.
William Meek Paſtor of *Salford*.
James Walton Min. of *Blakely*.
David Durie Preacher at *Gorton*.
John Walker Preacher of the Word.
Samuel Joanes Min. at *Hoal*.
Henry Welſh Min. of Gods Word at *Chorley*.
Thomas Crompton Min. at *Aſtley*.
Peter Bradſhaw Min. at *Cockey*.
Iſaac Ambroſe paſtor of *Preſton*.
James Bradſhaw paſtor of the Church at *Wigan*.
John Fogge paſtor of *Liverpool*.
Richard Maudſley paſtor at *Ellens*.
Robert Yates paſtor at *Warrington*.
William Dun Min. of *Ormeskirk*.
Thomas Norman paſtor at *Newton*.

Paul

Paul Latham paſtor *of Standiſh.*
VVilliam Leigh paſtor at *Newchurch*
VVill: Garner preacher of the Goſpel
Thomas VVhitehead paſtor at *Halton*
Robert Shaw Min. at *Cockeram.*
Edward Gee paſtor at *Eccleſton.*
VVill: Brownſword paſtor at *Douglas.*
Chriſtopher Edmundſon paſtor at *Garſtang.*
Peter Atkinſon Min. at *Ellel.*
Richard VValker Min. at *VVarton.*
VVilliam Smith Min. at *Overkellet.*
Robert Seddon min. of the Goſpel at *Alker.*
Robert Cunningham preacher at *Hamilton.*
John Fiſher paſtor at *Biſpham.*
John Jaques paſtor *of Bolton:*
John Syll paſtor *of Greſſingham.*
John Harper } Miniſters of the Goſpel at
Rich: Goodwin } *Bolton* in the Moors.

March 6. 1648. Imprimatur JOHN DOWNAME.

FINIS.